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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING IN 1990

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 7 December 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. KOUZNETSOV

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 7)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Islamic Republic of Iran (E/1982/3/Add.43) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegation of Iran to reply to the questions put by members of the Committee at the previous meeting.

2. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran) recalled that his Government was extending full co-operation to the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, who had visited Iran on two occasions and had presented his conclusions to the Commission and to the Third Committee of the General Assembly. At the Committee's preceding meeting reference had been made to the contents of a report by a non-governmental organization. However, there was abundant information concerning the crimes of the terrorist group concerned, which had been based in Baghdad throughout the war imposed on Iran and which had even made armed incursions into Iranian territory, killing villagers in the frontier region. He would therefore not respond in detail to personal statements since such allegations had been dealt with extensively both in the Commission and in the Third Committee, as a result of which many of them had been declared unfounded. The constructive co-operation of his Government with the Commission had led to two consensus resolutions being adopted by the General Assembly, the most recent only a few days previously. Though Iran had reservations on certain statements made by the Special Representative and consequently on the General Assembly resolutions, he was of the opinion that the up-to-date information provided was more useful to persons following the issues which fell within the mandate of the Commission than reports were based on one-sided and uninvestigated allegations. His delegation would endeavour in all sincerity and clarity to respond to the questions which had been asked and to continue the constructive dialogue with the Committee by providing further written information as required.

3. Mr. MOHSEN-POUR (Islamic Republic of Iran), responding to questions asked by Mr. Simma and Mr. Neneman on special education, referred to in paragraph 6 of his country's report (E/1982/3/Add.43), said that children leaving primary school with very good results could take part in an annual nation-wide examination in mathematics and science, held in conjunction with intelligence tests. Those with the best performance were selected to continue their secondary education in schools for gifted students under the supervision of qualified teachers. Great care was taken in developing the talents of such students. Seven groups were classified as exceptional children. They were the gifted, the mentally retarded, the blind, the partially blind, the deaf, the partially deaf and the physically handicapped. The aim of special education was to help exceptional children of all types to make maximum use of their mental and physical abilities. For the academic year 1989/1990, the number of such exceptional students was estimated at 32,455, of whom 12,636 were female. There were 498 exceptional schools nation-wide; in Tehran there were 81.

4. Mr. Simma and Mr. Mratchkov had asked about illiteracy rates and literacy courses in the Islamic Republic of Iran. He would begin by providing some background information. In 1966, only 29.4 per cent of a population of

19 million persons over 7 years of age had been literate, the proportion being 50.4 per cent in urban areas and 15.1 per cent in rural areas. In 1972, the overall percentage of literates had been 47.1 per cent out of a population of 26 million persons over 7 years of age, the rate for urban and for rural areas being 65.5 per cent and 29.1 per cent respectively. After the Islamic Revolution, the Literacy Movement Organization had been established to combat illiteracy. Between 1979 and 1989, the Organization had arranged literacy classes for 8,248,628 persons, 3 million of whom had received a certificate of completion of their literacy courses. The literacy programme comprised two stages: a primary stage of 180 hours and a complementary stage of 288 hours. The programme might take longer for illiterates not speaking Farsi. With the onset of the imposed war in 1980, the Government had been obliged to give priority to defence matters, but after the establishment of the cease-fire, a new literacy programme had been introduced in June 1990. Eighty thousand illiterates had participated in a three-month course and an additional 150,000 people had enrolled in regular classes. It was hoped that, by the turn of the century, 8 million illiterates out of 14 million in the group aged between 10 and 35 would be covered by literacy programmes.

5. According to current estimates, the population of Iran over 7 years old would increase to almost 49 million by 1993 and to 57.8 million by 1998. At the same time, it was estimated that the literacy rate would increase to 76.7 per cent by 1993 and to 86.1 per cent by 1998.

6. Mr. Simma, referring to paragraph 28 of the report, had stated that only 5,000 persons out of a total of 1 million applicants had received loans. However, the total number of the employees of the Ministry of Education, including teachers, had been only about 600,000 in the 1989/1990 academic year. Even if all of them had applied, the number of applicants would have been much less than the figure mentioned by Mr. Simma. Another question asked by Mr. Simma related to regulations governing foreign travel by teachers. Teachers, like other Iranian citizens, enjoyed the right to travel abroad and, moreover, like other Iranian civil servants, they could purchase tickets for travel with a 40 per cent discount. The number of Iranian citizens who applied for passports was recorded annually in passport offices throughout Iran. Information about the number of Iranian teachers who applied for and received passports could be provided if required. In response to another question, he stated that, officially, teachers taught for 24 hours per week. However, in view of the shortage of teachers, they were requested to do overtime, but they were remunerated correspondingly. With regard to the granting of permission to establish educational institutions (para. 38), preference was given to qualified teachers with at least five years' teaching experience.

7. A number of members of the Committee had asked questions about religious and secular education. There was a long tradition of education in Iran, which had produced experts in many fields who enjoyed a world-wide reputation. In the course of time, two systems of education had emerged: theological seminaries and the formal education system supervised and funded by the Government. Theological seminaries taught Islamic culture, whereas formal schooling included many subjects in addition to religious instruction, which religious minorities were not required to take. A typical curriculum in an academic secondary school would currently include two hours of instruction a week in Arabic, geometry, mathematics, chemistry, biology, history and physical education, three hours of instruction a week in religion and ethics,

a foreign language other than Arabic, algebra and physics, and four hours' instruction in Persian language and literature. It was the purpose of all education in Iran to train students in accordance with the manpower requirements of society.

8. Mr. Marchan Romero had inquired about university fees and about education for refugees. Education was free in State universities, but in private higher education institutes, students paid tuition fees. With regard to refugees, the Ministry of Education provided educational opportunities for Afghan and Iraqi-Kurdish school-age children and adult illiterate refugees and for other ethnic groups living in Iran. Over the preceding five years more than 80,583 Afghans and 7,544 Iraqi refugees had attended literacy classes. Such educational opportunities were provided at the expense of Iranian children. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, provided education for refugees. Detailed information could be provided later if required.

9. Mr. Alston had asked about the education of the Iranian Kurdish people. Kurdistan was one of the provinces of Iran and had a population of nearly 1 million. The number of pupils in the 1989/1990 academic year had been nearly 259,700, which indicated that more than 70 per cent of school-age children were attending school. Thus the education situation in respect of Iranian Kurdish people was similar to that in other parts of the country.

10. Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño had asked about the working conditions of women in Iran. An Iranian woman seeking employment was not required to show the prospective employer written permission from her husband. Nearly 50 per cent of Iranian primary-school teachers were female and most of them were married.

11. In conclusion, he noted that questions had been asked about the work experience of Iranian students. Students spent one day a week acquiring experience of working conditions in the labour market. Boys were naturally interested in the agricultural and industrial sectors, whereas girls sought jobs in such areas as home crafts and health. There was no discrimination in employment opportunities as between boys and girls.

12. Mr. SIMMA recalled that he had also asked a question about the implication of paragraph 2 (c) of the report. He inquired what was the definition of "tyranny and domination" and whether it was possible for students to criticize the current régime in Iran. Referring to paragraph 24, he asked what was the position of the Baha'is with regard to educational opportunities. The Iranian delegation had addressed his question on loans (para. 28), but it had not stated how many loan applications were granted. He would also remind the Iranian delegation that article 14 of the Covenant called for a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all. He inquired what progress was being made in Iran in that respect.

13. Mr. TEXIER recalled that he had asked two questions which had not yet been answered. The first was whether it was possible for a student to have a secular education in Iran. The second was whether there was true equality between the sexes in Iran in respect of access by women to all professions. The Iranian representative had referred to the interest of female students in home crafts and health: did no girls ever wish to become engineers or doctors?

14. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO endorsed Mr. Texier's question about the possibility of secular education. With regard to paragraph 18 of the report, he asked for information about the scope of the free university. Was that university part of the private sector?

15. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO requested further information about the civil rights of women and the punishments inflicted on women under the Penal Code. Was there any intention of modifying such penalties? She also asked, with regard to gifted children, what chance there was of a girl being allowed to train for a career which was not traditionally feminine.

16. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran), replying to Mr. Simma's first question, said that in the past the Iranian people had been dominated by tyrannical régimes. It was therefore natural that the educational system should encourage political independence. The Islamic Republic of Iran was proud of the objectives of teaching designed to make people aware of the dangers of dictatorship and to learn the lessons of the past.

17. As far as discrimination in education in Iran was concerned, his colleague had already given details of the number of students of recognized religious minorities in Iran. According to the Constitution no one could be brought to account for holding a particular opinion. Students were not questioned about their religious inclinations. All Iranian citizens, regardless of background, race or sex, were considered equal before the law and were treated equally by legislation, regulations and the Constitution. He was not trying to evade the issue of the Baha'is, which had been mentioned in the questionnaire prepared by the pre-sessional working group, but the question was legally flawed. The issue had been discussed with the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights. The Baha'is were not a religious minority, and not in fact a minority at all. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had been working on a definition of minorities for many years and had not yet produced one. Until the issue was clarified he was unable to answer the question.

18. According to articles 19 and 20 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iranians of whatever ethnic or tribal group enjoyed the same rights. Complexion, race, language and the like did not confer any privilege.

19. As for the Government stand on the Baha'is, a circular sent to all ministries by the Office of the Prime Minister had stated that no official or representative of the Islamic Republic was allowed to deprive them of their legal and social rights.

20. Mr. MOHSEN-POUR (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he did not have available details of the number of teachers who had received government loans but would submit them in the near future.

21. On the question of compulsory education, he said that, even before the turn of the century, it had been planned that over 85 per cent of school-age children should have access to education. Compulsory education had still not been introduced, however, although it could be if financial assistance were to be provided. However, illiterate persons were not allowed to apply for employment in the government or in non-governmental organizations before attending literacy classes. Thus, there were no illiterates in government

service. Before completing military service, recruits had to be literate, for otherwise their exemption certificates were not issued.

22. The goals of education were identified and determined by the people. More than 98 per cent of the Iranian people were Muslims and wished to have religious instruction for their children. The Ministry of Education had to accede to that desire and had therefore included three hours of religious instruction per week in the syllabus.

23. As far as higher education was concerned, when the Islamic Revolution had begun, all higher educational institutions including private ones, some of which belonged to foreign countries, had come under governmental jurisdiction. Two or three years later the Government had granted permission to the private sector to establish educational institutions. The free Islamic university was a non-governmental body which charged fees for tuition.

24. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said he believed that his country had attained the objectives of compulsory education through its existing system. There was a high literacy rate and a high rate of participation in primary and secondary education. Under the Revolution, important progress had been made and not many problems subsisted. Any problems of illiteracy were due not to the fact that the system was not compulsory but to the reluctance of parents in rural areas to send their children to school when they could work.

25. He believed that he had already in fact replied to the questions of Mr. Texier, but his colleague might be able to provide further details if needed. Mr. Texier had asked if there was a possibility of secular education in Iran. He did not quite understand the meaning of "secular" in that context: there was no such thing as Islamic physics or chemistry. It was impossible not to dispense religious instruction in a country like the Islamic Republic of Iran, where there were over 15 million Muslims.

26. Mr. Texier's second question was whether boys and girls had a choice of courses. The syllabus was planned to take account of the needs of the State and the people, and was designed by Statesmen, government officials and educational research workers. The system was not an elective one as in the United States, for instance. Schoolchildren could not be left to decide whether or not they wished to take a particular course but university students could decide for themselves on their field of study.

27. If Mr. Texier's question was addressed to vocational training in the last few years of high school, it was true there was no equality between boys and girls. The vocational training courses were based on the traditional inclinations of Iranian parents. Naturally courses in mechanics, for instance, could be devised for girls, but he believed that there would be few takers. The courses had been fully researched.

28. The idea that women merely stayed at home in his country seemed to be rife because, since the Revolution, Iran had not informed the world about the social status of its women. It was not the case that the Government did not wish women to work. Girls attended primary and secondary school but many of them then married between the ages of 20 and 25. After that age they were embarrassed to remain single. The fact that women were family-oriented rather than work-oriented was not due to government policy but to family tradition.

29. Mr. MOHSEN-POUR (Islamic Republic of Iran), replying to Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño's question about gifted girl students, said that there was no problem in that regard. In the forthcoming international physics Olympiad two out of the six Iranian candidates would be women.

30. Moreover, women were indeed able to conduct research in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There was a special university for women, although they could of course attend other universities, and some 20 per cent of all doctors in the country were women. He did not have all the data on the percentage of female research workers to hand but would send them to the Committee if they were required.

31. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran), replying to a question from Mr. Marchan Romero, said that a great many women voted in parliamentary and presidential elections. Whereas Western women had been given the vote only quite recently, women in his country had been enfranchized since the introduction of Islam. There were four women members of parliament who specifically investigated the social problems of women. Statistics on women's participation in the various professions could be provided if necessary.

32. He was unable to reply to the questions concerning civil rights and the Penal Code vis-à-vis women. However, the Constitution contained certain articles that demonstrated the high regard of Islamic society for women, who were in no way considered second-class citizens. The Penal Code and civil rights legislation were in accordance with the teachings of Islam and governed by the spirit of the Constitution.

33. Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño had asked whether there were plans to amend the Penal Code. He asked if she could be more specific as to the provisions in which she was interested.

34. His delegation had been more than satisfied at the co-operation it had received from the Commission on Human Rights, which was why it was addressing itself to other committees in the United Nations system. The higher authorities of his country had been convinced that it would be beneficial to dispel any misunderstandings. Any further questions would be welcomed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although he could not guarantee that the questions would be answered immediately, they would be taken seriously.

35. His delegation would be happy to provide Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño with a special report on the position of women if the request was made formally.

36. Explaining the system of free and State-run universities, he said the fees in State-run universities were so low that there was heavy competition for admission. After the revolution, the private sector had been invited to become involved in the provision of higher education, and the result had been the free universities. The fees for such universities were much higher, and they were entirely controlled by the private sector.

37. Mr. NENEMAN said he appreciated the goodwill shown by the Iranian delegation in answering questions, even if he did not always agree with the arguments advanced. He drew attention yet again to the lack of any information on article 15, and requested an explanation of that omission.

38. If 98 per cent of the population was Muslim and favoured religious instruction in schools, that was well and good. The Committee's task, however, was to ascertain whether the right of the remaining 2 per cent of the population to have instruction in another religion, or to have no religious instruction at all, was being safeguarded.

39. It would help the Committee to gain an idea of how women's rights were implemented in practice if the delegation could provide statistics on the number of women professionals - physicians, lawyers and engineers, for example - and the number of women students in those and other disciplines.

40. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO said her questions on the Labour Code had been prompted by the very frank description of the penalties for adultery. She thought it would be an excellent idea for the Committee to be provided with a study on the treatment of women under the Iranian Penal and Civil Codes.

41. Since equality of the sexes should be reflected in equality of opportunity, it would be useful to know whether there were any associations - of professional women, for example - working to expand the opportunities open to women. She would like to hear whether members of the Baha'i faith had access to university education, and whether institutions or associations that had no religious affiliations could be established.

42. Mr. ALSTON said that a number of questions he had asked had not been answered. Was it true, for example, that members of the Baha'i faith had not been allowed to enrol in primary and secondary education before 1988, and were still denied access to universities today? The delegation's statement about the definition of minorities raised an interesting legal point but failed to address the real issue. Whether or not minority rights were treated as group rights was irrelevant to the existence of the rights of individual members of those groups. He would therefore appreciate receiving more information on the status of Kurds and on the disparities among various ethnic and economic groups in the enjoyment of the right to education.

43. Finally, he would warmly welcome a study on the status of women, as proposed by the Iranian delegation.

44. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA said that he, too, remained concerned about the rights of members of the Baha'i faith. He did not see that the Islamic Republic of Iran's position as a third world nation situated in the Middle East should in any way modify its approach to the Baha'is.

45. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said he was not in possession of sufficient information to tackle the subject of article 15, but would submit the relevant information in writing.

46. Concerning the right to religious instruction of the 2 per cent of the population that did not espouse the Muslim faith, he said that children in that category were not required to attend religious instruction classes and were allowed to play in the school yard instead.

47. There were a great many women physicians, particularly in Tehran. He would provide statistics in writing on the number of women professionals in various fields.

48. As to the number of women students, he said that in the 1989/1990 academic year, 20,000 students had followed courses in the social sciences - 12,000 men and 8,000 women. For higher degrees in social sciences, there had been 1,500 students in all - 1,300 men and 200 women. In engineering, there had been a total of 60,627 students, 58,071 men and 2,556 women. For higher degrees in engineering, there had been 18 candidates, 17 men and 1 woman. In civil engineering and architecture, there had been 1,885 students, 1,520 men and 365 women. Figures on students in other disciplines would be provided in writing.

49. He was unaware of any move to modify the penalties for adultery. Ninety-eight per cent of the population supported the laws and traditions of Islam. His country saw no contradiction between its Penal Code and the norms of international law.

50. There were a great many women's associations and women professionals were well represented in their memberships. Any group of women could set up a women's association if it so desired.

51. The Kurds lived mainly in a single province whose area was 25,000 km^2. There were 258,000 pupils in the province. He was not aware of any specific problems with the Kurds. The Ministry of Education paid the same attention to them as to other ethnic groups residing in other provinces. He did not at present have the necessary information on the treatment of the various ethnic groups, but undertook to provide it in writing.

52. On the treatment of the Baha'is, he said the subject had been covered extensively in the work of the Commission on Human Rights. If the Committee would accept the terminology and approach adopted by the Special Representative of the Commission, the dialogue would be much more fruitful.

53. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the report submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran. He thanked the Iranian delegation for its co-operation and, in particular, for undertaking to provide additional information in writing, which attested to its desire for continued dialogue with the Committee.

54. Mr. Mohsen-Pour and Mr. Tabatabaee (Islamic Republic of Iran) withdrew.

Costa Rica (E/1990/5/Add.3) (continued)

55. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rodriguez Alpizar (Costa Rica) took a place at the Committee table.

56. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to make concluding observations on the initial report by Costa Rica.

57. Mr. MRATCHKOV said that the initial report had not been drafted according to the general guidelines on the form and content of such reports. It merely enumerated legislation in force and reproduced excerpts from the Constitution and other legislative texts, providing no interpretation thereof or information on the practical aspects of the implementation of the Covenant. In answering the questions prepared by the pre-sessional working group, the Costa Rican delegation had filled many of the gaps left by the report and had entered into a fruitful dialogue with the Committee. The supplementary

information given in the replies, however, had not enabled members of the Committee to acquire a true sense of how the Covenant was implemented in practice.

58. The Committee would therefore request the Government of Costa Rica to submit supplementary information in writing. Such information should cover unemployment protection, the impact of the external debt, just and favourable conditions of work, an adequate standard of living, and social security. The ability of foreigners fully to exercise trade union rights should also be addressed.

59. Finally, the Committee would draw the attention of the Costa Rican Government to the need to adhere closely to the relevant guidelines in preparing its periodic reports.

60. Mr. KONATE said he endorsed that analysis but believed that one additional point should be stressed. The Committee should allude, in its report, to the entirely unacceptable and provocative attitude shown towards one of its members, and it should recall the tone of dialogue that it was desirable to establish for the consideration of reports.

61. The CHAIRMAN said that, during the exchange referred to by Mr. Konate, he had stressed the impartiality of members of the Committee, who served in their personal capacity. The exchange had been reflected in the summary records, and he saw no need for it to be mentioned in the Committee's report. In accordance with requests made at the meeting, an account of the exchange would be sent to all permanent missions in Geneva. He thought that that, together with the summary records, should suffice as coverage of a lamentable and, fortunately, unusual incident in the Committee's work.

62. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA, recalling the Chairman's personal endorsement the previous day of the remarks he had made, said that the matter did not involve only one member, but the entire Committee.

63. In his opinion, the question should be reflected in the report of the Committee. If no reference was made to the situation, the same thing might happen to other members of the Committee at another meeting. He thought that the representative of Costa Rica should inform his Government of the concern expressed by members of the Committee.

64. Mr. ALSTON said that he agreed with the comments made by Mr. Texier on the issue and on the need to maintain propriety in the dialogue between States parties and the Committee.

65. Members were in the process of formulating the Committee's concluding observations. In that regard, one of the experts was expected to draft a text which was as careful, balanced and honest as possible. Once the draft had been prepared, the Committee would endorse it and it would then become the de facto view of the Committee. In other words, it was generally assumed that the Committee as a whole would not disagree with the text. However, every member of the Committee had the right to comment on the draft and to propose amendments to it. If a member wished to add other matters to the draft, they would be reflected in the final report. Mr. Konate's comments would therefore be included in the report.

66. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the light of the discussion, the rapporteur might be requested to draft a text which would take account of the comments made and would be discussed at the time of the adoption of the report.

67. Mr. SIMMA said that he fully endorsed the remarks made by Mr. Texier the previous day as well as the comments by the Chairman. The fact that he had not spoken at the time of the exchange between Mr. Alvarez Vita and the representative of Costa Rica should not be interpreted to mean that he accepted any intrusion into the independence of the experts or into their choice of information.

68. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its examination of the report of Costa Rica.

69. Mr. Rodriguez Alpizar (Costa Rica) withdrew.

Dominican Republic (E/1990/5/Add.4)

70. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Suazo and Ms. Bursztejn-Lavigne (Dominican Republic) took places at the Committee table.

71. Mr. SUAZO (Dominican Republic), introducing his country's report (E/1990/5/Add.4), said that it reflected the legal and institutional measures taken by the Republic to ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of the Covenant in the country. Those provisions, which were implemented to the greatest possible extent, were very difficult to apply in some areas because of the weakness of the relevant government institutions.

72. Referring to the list of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of his country's initial report (E/C.12/WG/1990/CRP.5/Rev.1), he said, with regard to question 1 on how the Covenant had been incorporated into domestic legislation, that it had become an integral part of the Constitution. Various articles of the Constitution corresponded to provisions of the Covenant. In general, the Dominican Republic recognized and enforced all standards of international law, in particular inter-American international law. His country was in favour of economic and political solidarity among the American States and belonged to regional groups such as the Organization of American States. Moreover, it had ratified a number of human rights agreements at the inter-American level.

73. The Dominican Republic was a sovereign, free and independent State. Its political system was a democracy based on freely elected institutions which implemented the provisions of the Covenant.

74. With regard to question 2 concerning the amount of international co-operation and the percentage of GNP it represented, he was unable to give an immediate answer since he did not have the necessary statistical data. As soon as his delegation had the statistics, it would make them available to the Committee.

75. With regard to question 3 on what programmes were implemented using either official development assistance or international co-operation to promote the rights covered by the Covenant, he said that the President of his country had recently ratified a measure to ensure that the Labour Code and the Constitution were kept up to date so as to bring them into line with the international instruments acceded to by the country, such as the Covenant.

76. As to question 5 on how foreigners were guaranteed the rights established in articles 6-15, he said that the report contained useful information. The Constitution clearly spelled out the fact that foreigners enjoyed the same rights and privileges as citizens. Foreigners resident in the Dominican Republic were protected by the same laws as were Dominican citizens. They also enjoyed the protection of international agreements entered into by the Dominican Republic. Xenophobia and discrimination based on race, colour or religion did not exist in the Dominican Republic, which had always been a country of voluntary exile. In that connection, he said that no one had accused the Dominican Republic of being a country that mistreated foreigners.

77. With respect to question 6 concerning the situation of women in Dominican society, he said he had little to add to what was contained in the report. Women did not suffer from discrimination in any field whatever, and they played an active role in the econmic life of the country. The report indicated the legal instruments which protected women vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

78. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would continue its examination of the report of the Dominican Republic at its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.